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The Blinn College Fine Arts Program is committed to fostering artistic, musical, and verbal expression on our campuses and within our communities.

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BLINN COLLEGE FINE ARTS EXPRESS



Cook and Kinson Continue Mentorship Role As Phi Theta Kappa Advisors

The Beta Alpha Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (International Honor Society) continue the tradition of being a renowned chapter under the tutelage of Karin Kinson and Debbi Cook. Cook has been an advisor of this prestigious student organization for four years and Kinson has served in this capacity for three and a half years. The tireless devotion they have to the organization and their students is rewarded by the success of the many projects they champion. On March 6th - 9th, 2003 the state conference celebrated the chapter's success by awarding the following accolades to the Beta Alpha Chapter; #3 Chapter in the Region, 5-Star Chapter Award, and the chapter president, Bobbi Jo Lyles was inducted into the Texas Hall of Honor for Outstanding Members. Additionally, Debbi Cook advanced to the Vice Chairperson position on the Regional Advisory Board. Beta Alpha's proudly carry on the long-standing Phi Theta Kappa tradition of being actively involved within the community. This com-

mitment is illustrated by this year's events which include the following; (1) mentorship at the Boys & Girls Club, (2) community building via on-campus activities, (3) sponsorship of speakers to address various health issues, (4) participation in Special Olympics, and (5) sponsorship of an activity by which to donate to a local food pantry. Notably, the projects they sponsor show the far reaching scope of their vision - a vision which encompasses the totality of the human condition; body, mind and spirit. One of the most touching events was the Washington County Relay For Life of which Beta Alphas worked as founding members. The Beta Alpha membership recruited fifteen teams from Blinn College to take part in this important event. The ambiance of the evening was paramount to the mission of raising cancer awareness. Countless candles surrounded the walking track as they illuminated the personalized tributes people left for those loved ones who were deceased

were engaged in battle with the disease. The event poignantly focused on paying tribute to the fallen victims and celebrating those who survived. Whether raising awareness of health issues, acting as mentors to the youth of our community, bringing emotional support and comfort to those in crisis, or providing food to those in need the Beta Alpha membership are civically engaged and driven to continue the tradition of being steadfast in their devotion to scholarship, service, leadership and fellowship. The profound words of Lincoln capture the essence of the Beta Alpha chapter, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today." These words also poignantly illustrate the reason for Debbi Cook's and Karin Kinson's continued mentorship of the Beta Alpha Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa.

Nies Speaks Out On Mentorship

Brad Nies has been Director and Instructor within the Blinn College Theater Arts Department since 1990. He earned an A.S. in Theater Arts from Amarillo College, a B.S. degree in Radio/Television/Film from West Texas State University, and a M.A. degree in Communication (Theatre Emphasis). He currently holds memberships in such organizations as the Texas Educational Theatre Association, the Texas Community College Speech and Theatre Association, the Washington County Arts Council, and the Navasota Theatre Alliance.

Nies states "As an instructor at Blinn College, I always put my students first. Seeing that they are the primary reason I am here, I try to tap into the potential they have of being productive, educated, and well rounded citizens. As theatre arts director, my majors come to me with such potential. As their director, I try to broaden their talents by allowing them the opportunity to be creative and have fun during the rehearsal/performance process. For the past ten years, I have taken my theatre arts majors to the Texas Community College Speech and Theatre Association Play Festival. This past month, I took our students to Abilene, Texas to take part in the Texas Christian College Theatre Festival. The TCCSTA Play Festival allows students the opportunity to win awards and see other community college performances. Additionally, the Play Festival allows students the opportunity to receive a critique from an eminent theatre critic, and take an active role in theatre related workshops." Mr. Nies's years of committed service to his students and Blinn College have provided a venue of exciting and engaging theatrical productions and classroom experiences. The Blinn Players will perform their next production entitled "A Midsummer Night's Dream" on April 15th and 16th in the Dr. W.W. O'Donnell Performing Arts Building (pictured above). For ticket information call 979-830-4024.



The Mission of Mentoring: *An Editorial by Dr. Margarita Gangotena*



While mentoring was not spelled out during my college years, nevertheless, I was fortunate to have mentors.

Three of them were outstanding. The political scientist and head of Minnesota's College of Education doctoral program in international education, Joseph Mestenhauser, spent many hours in his office or at student organization meetings, teaching me about groups and leadership. When I headed a bachelor's degree program, he helped me to understand leadership and management in education. In my graduate years in speech communication, Minnesota's Professor Emeritus Ernest G. Bormann taught me research and teaching. When I started a career as a corporate manager with Dow Chemical/Life, my boss there analyzed situations and probed solutions with me, thus enlightening me to the subtleties of leadership in American corporations. It was by being a mentee that I learned to mentor, much like a counselor is trained by a psychologist through **a circular process of modeling, analysis, planning, and implementation.**

I learned from my mentors something

that the National Mentoring Center (www.nwrel.org) teaches in its training and support curriculum for mentors: first, to communicate and thus to connect with the mentees. Second, I learned to keep the **relationship active** with the mentees in order to be able to plant in their lives words that would be seeds for character and ethical thinking and action. Third, I learned that the **circular model** mentioned above is necessary in order for the mentee to learn and release his/her creative force and grow as a mentor.

Communication, relationship building, and informal instruction are three elements that I have seen exercised by faculty in the Fine Arts Division, whether in the classroom, in their work with student organizations, or in their work with their peers. You will see this reflected in the Fine Arts faculty in all the campuses in and out of the classroom. However, some questions still remain unanswered for junior college teachers, questions that each faculty member through the last decades has tried to answer in the best way possible in lieu of formal training in this area.

It is easy to identify the mentee; we can see them in students, in first year faculty and/or staff, and even in the occasional

prospective student that stops by our office while searching for the admissions coordinator. What are we to mentor the mentee has not been clarified altogether. Are we to mentor them to be speech communication specialists, or famous public orators, musicians, or actors? Are we to mentor them to be men and women of character? Are we to just show them the ropes and let them grab them if interested? And, then, who out of 150 or more students are going to be the mentees? Only those with the potential to become the best in our subject? Or, conversely, in the hope to reach more numbers, should we cater our mentoring to those that may not be interested in excelling? And then, how do we mentor dozens of students at a time? What techniques have we developed? While we do not propose to have answered all these questions, in this newsletter issue, you will read about the mentors in the Fine Arts Division who, in their **process of caring**, have answered some of the above questions. In their successes you will hear not only their heart for teaching, but some of them will also share how they attained their mentoring techniques.

The Domino Effect of Mentoring

by Dr. Margarita Gangotena



Jerry A. Christal

I saw new and unfamiliar faces on the first day of classes this spring. I was prompted to ask, "What does each one hope for? How willing are they to engage in the learning process?" One of these students, Jerry said he was an adult learner who had never attended college. "Dr. Gangotena," he said, "I want my first speech to be on how I stopped being an alcoholic and drug addict" After asking a few questions, I saw that he was ready to give this kind of speech, he would benefit from the experience, and other students would learn about character, accomplishments, and overcoming of obstacles. It was going to be a message of hope. As I do with all my students, I checked and helped him to correct his outline and taught his class how to deliver their first message. The tension of the first weeks of orientation towards the learning of a new process was about to end with the first person who gave a speech. Thereafter, the students would be more confident. February 6th arrived and with it Jerry's turn to stand up, for the first time, in front of a group of people to speak about a topic that could have been hard for him to discuss anywhere else.

With the kind of courage that can only be guided by personal conviction in a supportive environment, Jerry, gave his speech, power point and all, as a testimony of his healing and of the love of his wife and of God. Shortly thereafter, I got a letter asking me to review another of Jerry's speeches. Jerry, a counselor with BVCASA, was going to give a talk to MADD. I was very excited over the news and I corrected his work and, then, heard about the wonderful job he had done. Jerry like many other students we have taught public speaking skills learned more than just how to write an outline and deliver a speech. Paraphrasing Jerry, he learned the confidence that is necessary to be a speaker that influences others. Since, he has been asked to deliver the speech to other chapters of MADD. The **domino effect of mentoring** has been set into motion as Jerry touches the lives of others through his mission of advocacy.

Student Mentorship: A Priority

Art galleries, concert halls and theatrical venues are central to keeping artistic passion alive for the Blinn College art, music and theatre faculty. These faculty members work diligently at their craft in order to provide students with high quality curriculum development and instruction within the academic environment. In this issue of the Fine Arts Express you will meet faculty who are dedicated to the mentorship of students. They mentor by example—living professional lives that are inspirational to the students they serve. They mentor by words of encouragement to students who strive to maximize their talent. And they mentor by maintaining high academic expectations within their classrooms. Through celebration of their craft and devotion to their students the Blinn College music, art, and theatre faculty have become not only master artists, musicians and actors but master mentors as well.



John Dujka:

John Dujka is music personified. Each energized, poignant and intense musical performance brings to fruition his countless years of disciplined study. His success as a respected musician acts as an inspiration to students and his body of work reveals that the hours of theoretical study and years of endless practice yield great “measure”. Students who witness his tireless devotion to his craft are inspired to be diligent in the pursuit of their own dreams. John performed for a packed house concert last fall in the Dr. W.W. O’Donnell Performing Arts Center at Blinn College and is active performing throughout the state of Texas a myriad of styles of music. In summing up John’s philosophy concerning student mentorship he stated the following, “If music is your passion and you devote the time needed to be the best you can be, then you will surely enjoy what you do in life.”

Jill Stewart: Featured Soloist



A member of the Blinn College Music Faculty since 1997, Jill Stewart received both the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from Texas Tech University and is currently Principle Clarinetist with the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra. As a recent featured soloist, Jill’s musical expertise was reported (by reviewer Penelope Kosztołnyk) in the March 4th issue of the Eagle; “the smoothness of Jill Stewart’s tone enthralled from the very beginning of Debussy’s First Rhapsody for Clarinet and Orchestra.” As rewarding as her own musical odyssey onto the symphony stage is when she witnesses her Blinn College students following in her footsteps as symphony musicians. Jill has the following reaction to seeing her students succeed at this high level of musical accomplishment, “Our April 6th concert features a marimba soloist and Krystal Michal, a freshman at Blinn, will be performing on marimba with the rest of the percussion section. It is so rewarding to see them have the experience of playing with professionals. It is a great learning opportunity for them and teaching opportunity for myself. With the clarinet players that perform with us, I am able to use the rehearsals as extended lessons and coach them through each step. It’s definitely a confidence builder for the students and gives them an idea of what it’s like to work as a professional musician. Former Blinn student, Karen Coleman, who is now a senior at Sam Houston State University, performs with us on a regular basis. Other students who have played with us are now music majors at SHSU, UT, SWT and SFA.”



Blinn Music Faculty Participate in the Brazos Valley Symphony

Performing with the Brazos Valley Symphony has been a rewarding experience for Blinn College faculty members (Larry Campbell, Dr. Craig Garrett, Jill Stewart and John McCroskey) while providing their students the opportunity to view these instructors as respected musicians. **Jill Stewart** (Blinn College Assistant Director of Bands) is the principal clarinetist. Jill was a member of the Lubbock Symphony from 1993-1997 and has performed with the Abilene Philharmonic, The Roswell Symphony, the San Angelo Symphony, and the Big Spring Symphony. **Larry Campbell** (Fine Arts Division Chair) performs as the tuba player. He received his Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music in Tuba Performance from the University of Houston Moores School of Music. He is also a member of the Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra. **Dr. Craig Garrett** (Director of Jazz Ensemble, Brass Ensemble, and Instructor of Trumpet) is 2nd trumpet. He earned his Bachelor and Master Degrees at the University of North Texas. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree with a major in trumpet performance and pedagogy from the University of Southern Mississippi. **John McCroskey** (Instructor of Trombone) is principal trombone. He performed with the Houston Symphony Orchestra for 27 years and with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra for two years. The music faculty who participate as members of the symphony actively demonstrate to students the synergistic nature of the symphony venue and the value of collaborative effort within the world of music.

Bussiki Provides Mentorship Through Civic Engagement

Dr. Marcelo Bussiki, director and conductor of the Brazos Valley Symphony and Blinn College instructor was featured in the Bryan/College Station Newspaper (The Eagle) on Sunday, February the 23rd. The article focused on musical programs performed at area elementary schools by members of the Brazos Valley Symphony. These events provided many youth within our



Photo provided by Dave McDermand

community the opportunity to develop an appreciation for and in some cases an introduction to classical music.

Beatriz Arnillas: Social Commentary on Canvas



Many paintings within Beatriz Arnillas’s powerful collection of works (a portion which can be viewed at nextmonet.com) illustrate the social commentary that can be produced via canvas. Her artistic work acts as inspiration to students regarding the impact that art can have within society. In essence, her body of work acts as a tool of mentorship to the students she serves. The artwork (pictured above) is entitled “The Lost Voice”.



Kunesh Receives NISOD Award

We are delighted to announce that one of our own, an excellent and dedicated teacher and MENTOR in the Bryan Fine Arts Division, has been chosen to receive the prestigious NISOD award which recognizes teaching excellence. The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) holds a yearly worldwide conference with participation of over 600 community colleges, 400 urban and technical colleges and 200 rural colleges from around the world. When asked about her initial reaction to the award, Dr. Kunesh answered that she felt “truly honored” and “immediately had thought of the many outstanding students who have made teaching a pleasure.”

Dr. Kunesh’s perspectives on teaching developed through many years of experience in various avocations and business endeavors and she reveals that “in all my jobs I did some form of teaching.” Rosemary indicated that her philosophy is one that values the “experience of learning.” She says, “I strive to serve as a mentor to my students. This mentoring role requires the ability to provide caring guidance.”

Like many educators, she believes that to help students experience success, she must encourage them to make a commitment to the course and to their own success in the course. “The classroom environment is an important element in the learning process,” She said, “I encourage the development of a non-threatening speaking environment” Dr. Kunesh recognizes that most students have a fear of public speaking. In order to help them,

she acknowledges this fear as common and then, “encourages students to work together in the development of a non-threatening environment.” Kunesh states that “positive encouragement within the classroom environment will frequently result in a “class personality” and the class members begin to function as a supportive group of peers. As a recipient of an award which recognizes teaching excellence, Kunesh has gained the distinction of being a master teacher. Notably, many of her students also recognize her as a master mentor. One student comment reveals the magnitude of the impact she has on her students, “I would like to say that in your lifetime you meet a lot of people. And it’s not everyday someone comes along who inspires you. Gives you hope and strength. Dr. Kunesh, that is what you have done for me.”

Brockman, Speck and Design II Art Students Act As Judges

Cathy Brockman and Jamie Speck (Blinn College Art Instructors) recently put theory into practice as they judged the Brenham Art League Art Show. The show featured artists ranging from first grade students to professional artists. The artwork included mixed media, oils, photography, watercolor, pencil drawings and pastel drawings. Brockman stated, “the show was a chance to better experience the artistic talents within our local community.” Additionally, Blinn College Design II art students recently judged scrapbooks for a regional competition of a civic organization. Their critique included organization, originality, and presentation of materials.

Duermeyer’s Reflections On Mentoring

When I first thought of mentoring I thought of opportunities arising with students in my own classes presently going on. Giving more thought to this, I realize most of my opportunities to mentor arise outside of my classroom. During the summer, I have been involved in student advising. This is an immediate example of mentoring, but a nice side-effect of advising is that I continue to have some of these students pop into my office throughout the year, maybe for advice, maybe just to say “Hi!”, maybe to have a recommendation letter written or signed. This also holds true for former students. I leave my office door open because it eases my touch of claustrophobia, initially not realizing that it also “opens the door” for more mentoring opportunities. Many of my resulting student contacts are with students not enrolled in any of my classes and some of these spontaneous contacts are about surprisingly serious issues! I also get asked, much to my amusement, to proof a variety of written reports, again for classes other than mine...I’m always happy to oblige. I guess what I have realized about mentoring, is that it arises very spontaneously, and the more open I am to avail myself to the opportunities, the more the students and I benefit.

Editors: Margarita Gangotena, Jane Haggard, Debbi Cook and April Cairnes

Rearview Mirror: Looking at where we have been through the eyes of Shirley Abraham

This last semester (Spring 2003) I was informed St. Michael’s Academy needed a mentor who could organize Blinn Students to help their students prepare for their first UIL Competition. Since I teach three creative speech classes (Oral interpretation) I got the call! I sent out my young army of eager, creative students to attack the assignment for extra credit. In return these are their words expressing their thoughts on how much more they learned from the experience.

Robert — “Have fun with it, and help the kids learn good techniques for later on in their life.” Jason — “I learned to teach in very basic, step by step ways—focusing on concrete skills, rather than abstract thought processes.” Nicole — “You have to adjust to their surrounding and their level so I had to change the way I spoke and the speed at which I talk.” Dori — “I learned patience! It’s hard controlling five 3rd thru 5th graders. Their parents wanted this for them—so I had to make it fun writing” (taught brain-storming, and how to organize thoughts) Creed — “Having a connection with a child means the world to them! The thing which sticks out the most is the level of influence someone like myself can have on someone!” Jennifer — “I learned the responsibility of becoming a role model and the responsibilities of being a role model.”

**Involvement breeds caring and learning.
Looking back didn’t you learn the same way?**